

Besprechungen

The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium, ed. A. Kaldellis – N. Siniosoglou. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017. 798 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-04181-3.

This volume, recently edited, is a valuable contribution to the intellectual history of Byzantium, offering a satisfying introduction to students and outsiders who wish to learn about sciences and literacy in the Byzantine Empire.

In their introduction (pp.1–24), the co-editors pinpoint the importance of Byzantium's intellectual history, defining the term as "the branch of historiography that focuses on the evolution of concepts and ideas within specific historical contexts and explores their political and rhetorical sources, entanglements and effects". These ideas, stemming mostly from Antiquity, are to be treated as a "way of being" and a worldview for Byzantine intellectuals. Of course, everyone has to keep in mind that speeches or dialogues were to be presented orally, and therefore *paideia* is not to be examined only in terms of texts. The editors also claim that the average Byzantine had acquired a religious education, so he could have possibly formulated a critical thought, even though he lacked the *θύραθεν παιδεία*. Moreover, Byzantine authors were not always connected to the upper class or the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These "individual" authors are the main subject of this volume, whereas the editors state that social and religious identity should not be mixed up with intellectual identity. The purpose of this volume is to overcome the cliché that Byzantium was a monolithic world, thus examined as "an archetypical Orthodox and absolutist society" (p. 18) and to shed light on ideas that were opposed to ideological formal orders.

The editors' basic aim was to create a useful manual both for students and experts of each field included in this volume, as well as to give a modern synthetic survey on Byzantine Intellectual History, focusing especially on the Middle and Late Byzantine periods. The book consists of six parts and includes thirty-eight chapters, ending up with a vast bibliography (divided into Byzantine sources and modern scholarship, in pp. 669–763), as well as an index of names (pp. 765–776) and a subject index (pp. 777–791). A short timeline of Byzantine intellectuals is attached to the back cover of the book.

The first part of this sizeable volume bears the title "The Transmission of Knowledge" and consists of five chapters. In the first study (Institutional Settings: The Court, Schools, Church and Monasteries, pp. 27–36), Jonathan Harris introduces the readers to the Byzantine institutions as centres of knowledge sharing. He also includes the various subjects a *curriculum* could incorporate. Emphasizing the role of the monasteries as centres for transmitting the knowledge is ab-

solutely justifiable, though the editors of the volume deny the predominance of clergymen concerning *paideia*¹. To the "struggling scholars" (p. 29) one should add the glaring case of Theodore Hyrtakenos². As for the education *curriculum* during the Komnenian era, a note on *schedography* is necessary³.

The second study entitled "Byzantine Books" (pp. 37–46) is a useful introduction to the meaning of the book in the Byzantine world. In her study, Inmaculada Pérez Martín speaks about the book's cost and preservation, the scribes and their own intellectual work in their *scholia marginalia*.

In the third essay of this chapter ("Questions and Answers", pp. 47–62), Stephanos Efthymiadis describes the way Christian writers utilized dialogue as a means for communicating their messages, usually under the title "Erotapokriseis". The essay embraces authors from Early Byzantium (Anastasios of Sinai), as well as Photios, Psellos, Michael Glykas and writers from Late Byzantium.

In the fourth study ("Classical Scholarship: the Byzantine Contribution", pp. 63–78) Eleanor Dickey highlights the contribution of Byzantines to the knowledge of classical literature, emphasizing their numerous exegetical, grammatical and lexicographical tools, which were necessary due to the gap between the written and the spoken language.

The last chapter of this part is an overview of the "Intellectual Exchanges with the Arab World" (pp. 79–98), written by Dimitri Gutas, Anthony Kaldellis and Brian Long. In this chapter, the writers examine the intercultural exchanges between Byzantium and the Arabic world from Late Antiquity till the 12th century, highlighting the effect of Arabic sources on Symeon Seth's work.

Part 2 "Sciences of the Word" is dedicated to words and their meaning and includes four chapters. In the first one ("Rhetoric and Rhetorical Theory", pp. 101–112), Stratis

¹ In the introduction, p. 13, we read that "... our texts were for the most part not generated on behalf of institutions ... for the most part our subject-matter was produced by individual authors ...".

² A. KARPOZELOS – G. FATOUROS, *The Letters of Theodoros Hyrtakenos*. Athens 2017, 11–26.

³ On *schedography*, see among other studies: P. AGAPITOS, John Tzetzēs and the blemish examiners: a Byzantine teacher on *schedography*, everyday language and writerly disposition. *Medioevo Greco* 17 (2017) 1–57; also I. VASSIS, Graeca sunt, non leguntur. *BZ* 86/87 (1993/1994) 1–19; I. POLEMIS, Προβλήματα της βυζαντινής σχεδογραφίας. *Hell* 45 (1995) 277–302; F. NOUSIA, *Byzantine Textbooks of the Palaeologan Period (StT 505)*. Vatican City 2016, 49–92.

Papaioannou offers an introduction to the meaning and the history of rhetoric in the Byzantine world, underlining the combination of Byzantine rhetoric with knowledge of politics.

The second chapter ("Byzantine Literary Criticism and the Classical Heritage", pp. 113–128) is about literary criticism by Byzantine scholars on several ancient treatises. Manolis Bourbouhakis gives prominence to Photios' criticism in his *Bibliothēke* and examines the exegetical works of Tzetzēs and Eustathios on ancient poetry, ending up with Metochites' essays on ancient writers.

In the third essay ("Theories of Art", pp. 129–140), Charles Barber tries to fill the gap concerning the absence of an account about Byzantine visual aesthetics. In his work, he expounds the importance of Neo-Platonists' ideas in the early Byzantine period and their effect on John of Damascus' writings defending icons. The essay also presents the theories on icons of Theodore the Stoudite, Leo of Chalcedon and Eustratios of Nicaea, ending with the Hesychast controversy, when Palamas was charged with opposition to icons.

The last study of the second part ("Legal Thought", pp. 141–166) is a satisfying introduction to the law books of the Byzantine Empire. Bernard Stolte begins his survey from Justinian's codification. Having examined the role of scholars, poets and lawyers in the early Byzantine period, he analyzes the compilation of the *Basilika* in the so-called "Macedonian Renaissance", ending up with the legal texts of the 11th and 12th centuries.

After the so-called "Sciences of the Word", the volume proceeds in examining the "Sciences of the World" in Part 3. Dominic O'Meara ("Conceptions of Science in Byzantium", pp. 169–182) familiarizes readers with the meaning of the word "science" in the Byzantine period, justifying the inclusion of astrology, alchemy and magic under this term. Apart from underlining the frequent tension between pagan science and Christian belief, O'Meara examines the effect of Platonic and Neoplatonic works on prominent Byzantine scholars (Psellos, Italos, Pachymeres, Gregoras, Gemistos Plethon) and the way the "Aristotelian" conception of science managed to predominate over Platonic influences.

The second essay concerning Sciences of the World is about astronomy (pp. 183–197). Anne Tihon, an expert on Byzantine astronomy, points out the meaning of astronomy in the Byzantine intellectual history throughout the centuries. Having distinguished astronomy from astrology and cosmology, Tihon examines the way students were inducted to this science, beginning with spherical and then proceeding to mathematical astronomy. In her study, she does not omit to refer to the importance of both Ptolemaic and Arabic astronomical treatises that affected Byzantine thought.

Paul Magdalino focuses on the importance of astrology in Byzantine society (pp. 198–214), searching out its intellectual presence in treatises (beginning with the *Tetrabiblos*) and horoscopes, as well as in historical references and comments, which reflect a constant interest in this field. However, Magdalino reports negative references to astrology, especially on behalf of the Church Fathers.

The fourth study of this part explores "Magic and the Occult Sciences" in Byzantium (pp. 215–233). Richard Greenfield relates magic to religious beliefs and points out that even

emperors and courtiers employed astrologers and magicians, while seeking for some answers in periods of insecurity. In his essay, Greenfield does not describe thoroughly the written sources for Byzantine magic; he rather prefers to distinguish several purposes of occult sciences and to speak about material evidence concerning magic (amulets, phylacteries etc.) as well as about the influence of pagan and Judaic ideas on magic practices.

In the fifth chapter ("Alchemy", pp. 234–251), Gerasimos Merianos offers exhaustive information on the way Byzantium perceived and developed alchemy on the basis of early written sources (papyri and manuscripts) containing information about this science. He also traces references to the term *chymia* or the so-called "sacred art" in Byzantine sources and describes the two alchemical directions in Byzantine literature, especially in Psellos' work.

In the last chapter of Part III, Timothy Miller offers an introduction to Byzantine medicine ("Medical Thought and Practice", pp. 252–268), examining the perception of the medical classical tradition in Byzantium and the new treatises written throughout the Byzantine millennium. In addition to medical texts, the writer detects references concerning surgery or anatomical details in historic and hagiographic sources. He also summarizes information about hospitals.

Part IV of the volume is about "Philosophy and Theology in Middle Byzantium" and consists of two introductory chapters, five essays on Platonic and Aristotelian themes and four more under the title "Individuals in Context".

The first introductory essay written by D. Gutas and N. Siniosoglou ("Philosophy and Byzantine Philosophy", pp. 271–295) aspires to provide various views on the way Byzantines perceived philosophy. The writers classify Byzantine reports about philosophy as negative and positive, depending on whether the term was combined with a threat for Orthodoxy or not. They start their study with Early Christianity, when ancient philosophical texts were annotated according to Orthodox theology. Philosophy served polemical theology, while at the same period several scholars excelled at teaching philosophy (Psellos), though flirting always with the risk of coming in the line of fire of theologians' criticism (e.g. John Italos). In conclusion, everything should ultimately lead to acceptance of Christianity as the only truth, otherwise one could easily be condemned as heretical.

The second introductory study ("The formation of the Patristic Tradition", by J. McGuckin, pp. 296–312) discusses the configuration of the Orthodox doctrine in the 4th century, focusing on Church Fathers such as Athanasios and Cyril and the Cappadocians and the perception of the earlier patristic heritage throughout the following centuries.

Platonic themes included in Part IV are "The Byzantine Reception of Neoplatonism" (Tuomo Lankila), "Platonism from Maximos the Confessor to the Palaiologan Period" (Andrew Louth) and "Fate, Free Choice and Divine Providence from the Neoplatonists to John of Damascus" (Ken Parry). In the first essay (pp. 314–324), Tuomo Lankila examines the survival of Neoplatonic works (esp. Proklos, Porphyry and Pseudo-Dionysios) in the early Byzantine period, while in the second essay (pp. 325–340) Andrew Louth focuses on the way Maximos the Confessor, John of Damascus and scholars in the

11th century (esp. Psellos and Italos) applied Neoplatonic ideas in their works. Louth examines also the way these ideas were used during the 14th century by Gregory Palamas' opponents. Finally, Ken Parry (pp. 341–360) undertakes the explanation of the terms “*εἰμαρμένη, προαίρεσις, θεία πρόνοια*”, using excerpts from writers (3rd to 8th century).

As for the second section of Part IV (“Aristotelian Themes”), there are three chapters devoted either to the reception of Aristotelian works or to their inclusion in school curricula. Christopher Erismann's essay (pp. 362–380) deals with Aristotelian Logic in Byzantium and its association with the configuration of the Patristic logical tradition (Maximos the Confessor, John of Damascus), as well as with the renewal of logical studies in the 9th century (Leo the Mathematician, Photios). His retrospection about Aristotelian logic in Byzantium includes the contribution of the great masters of the 11th century (Psellos, Italos), the philosophical works of Blemmydes in the 13th century and the application of Aristotelian theories in Palamas' works defending Hesychasm in the 14th century. Concerning Gregoras' anti-Aristotelian attitude, Erismann seems to be rather dogmatic, writing that “Nikephoros Gregoras argued that logical studies should be dismissed”. As far as we are informed by his letters, Gregoras taught the so-called “Organon” in his school in the Chora monastery⁴, though he rejected several Aristotelian theories, defending his obvious preference for Plato⁵.

“The presence of Aristotle in Byzantine Theology” is the topic of another survey, examining the relationship between Byzantine Theology and Aristotle (pp. 381–396). David Bradshaw traces Aristotle's influence in the early Church writers, underlining the differences in the use of terms such as *nous*, *noetos*, *energein* etc. in patristic works. In this essay, the cases of John of Damascus and Photios are excellent examples of Aristotelian influence in theology.

In the last chapter on Aristotle, Michele Trizio examines the way Byzantines read and interpreted Aristotle, based either on Church Fathers or on late antique commentators. Trizio examines also how Aristotle was taught in schools and what sorts of criticisms were made of his writings (e.g. Metochites' criticism on Aristotle's inconsistencies). Trizio also refers explicitly to the various literary genres including references to Aristotle (pp. 397–412).

The last subsection of Part IV (IV.3, “Individuals in Context”) is dedicated to prominent philosophers. In the first essay, Phil Booth attempts to sketch the life of Maximos the Confessor, emphasizing his struggle against the monothelete doctrine (pp. 414–430), while in the second essay Anna Zhyrkova examines “John of Damascus' Philosophy of the Individual and the Theology of Icons”, which became an essential part of the

eastern Orthodox Tradition (pp. 431–446). The third study of the subsection is about Psellos' contribution to the intellectual history of Byzantium. David Jenkins also emphasizes Psellos' conception of ancient philosophers (pp. 447–461). Finally, Michele Trizio deals with “Trials on Philosophers and Theologians under the Komnenoi” (pp. 462–475), shedding light on the circumstances of these controversies and condemnations of several thinkers (Ioannes Italos, Neilos of Calabria etc).

Part V of the volume is about “Philosophy and Theology in Late Byzantium” and continues the topic of the previous part, focusing on Late Byzantium. Consisting of five studies, this part starts with “Theological Debates with the West (1054–1300)”, where Tia Kolbaba analyzes the reasons of the failure of Church Union in Lyon (1274), starting from the turning point of the schism between the Latin and Orthodox Churches in 1054 (pp. 479–493). In the following study (“The Hesychast Controversy”), Norman Rusell describes the phases of the big theological debate between Palamites and anti-Palamites in the 14th century from Barlaam Kalabros up to the case of Demetrios Kydones, justifying it as a conflict of two philosophical traditions within Orthodoxy (pp. 494–508). Connected to this, the next essay (Andrew Louth “Orthodox Mystical Theology and its Intellectual Roots”, pp. 509–523) traces early sources of mystical and ascetic tradition concluding that the predominance of Hesychasm came as a result of the earlier mystical theology.

Moshe Idel's chapter on “Kabbalah in Byzantium” (pp. 524–541) focuses on several Jewish intellectuals that came from Spain and composed Kabbalistic works on Byzantine soil during the Palaiologan period. Focusing on the cases of Abulafia and Isaiah Ben Joseph, Idel detects a rising interest for the Kabbalah in late Byzantium.

In the next study (“Aquinas in Byzantium”, pp. 542–556), Marcus Plested examines the great interest Byzantines showed in Aquinas' works, especially after Demetrios and Prochoros Kydones' translations of the *Summa contra gentiles* and *Summa theologiae*. Plested refers to Neilos Kabasilas' works against Aquinas, as well as to references in John Kantakouzenos' studies. The essay subsequently highlights Aquinas' impact on the conflict between Palamites and anti-Palamites as well as on the rivalry among Unionists and anti-Unionists in the 15th century.

The last chapter of Part V is entitled “Theology, Philosophy, and Politics at Ferrara-Florence” (pp. 557–572). Here Marie-Hélène Blanchet focuses on both political and religious aspects of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, underlining the importance of the Council as a case of exchanging ideas between the Byzantine and the Latin representatives. Under this perspective, although the Council failed in its basic aim and divided Byzantium even more, it is crucial that some Byzantine scholars (among them Bessarion, Theodore of Gaza and John Argyropoulos) played an important role in the Renaissance as transmitters of humanistic studies.

The last part of the volume (“Politics and History”) consists of five studies. In the first one, under the heading “*Basilicia*: The Idea of Monarchy in Byzantium, 600–1200”, Paul Magdalino gives an excellent review of the Byzantine monarchical idea as presented in historiography and law texts (pp. 575–598). Dimitris Krallis in “Historiography as Political

⁴ On Gregoras' lectures about Aristotle's Logic see Nicephori Gregorae Epistulae, ed. P.A.M. LEONE. Matino 1982, vol. II, ep. 111,7–10; see also A. SKLAVENTI, Το διδασκαλείον του Νικηφόρου Γρηγορά. *Byzantina Symmeikta* 28 (2018) 141–167, esp. 148–149.

⁵ D. MOSCHOS, Πλατωνισμός ή χριστιανισμός; Οί φιλοσοφικές προϋποθέσεις του Άντισυγχασμού του Νικηφόρου Γρηγορά (1293–1361). Athens 1998, 103–157.

Debate” (pp. 599–614) examines the way Byzantine historians used their works in order to express their own position or to criticize public affairs. Krallis claims that historians after 1204 often “approached contemporary events through the prism of not so distant past” offering as an example the successful reign of John III Batatzes, often quoted by Pachymeres and George of Pelagonia as a benchmark for their contemporary rulers (esp. Andronikos II). He also states that “late Byzantine historians kept their distance from contemporary events”. Even if this statement is more true in the case of Pachymeres than in Akropolites, it does not stand in the cases of Gregoras and Kantakouzenos, as they both often criticize public affairs⁶. As for the previously mentioned claim that ideal rulers were found in near-contemporary history, one can quote numerous passages in Gregoras’ “Rhomaïke Historia” demonstrating how ideal rulers and governors were identified in ancient Greek or Roman History⁷.

The next study is about “Theories of Decline from Metochites to Ibn Khaldūn” (pp. 615–632). Here Teresa Shawcross detects similar thoughts in the works of either Muslim (Ibn Khaldūn) or Christian writers of 14th century (Metochites, Gregoras, Kydones). Shawcross attributes these similarities to the harsh political circumstances e.g. the expansion of Turks and Mongols and the imminent threat of foreign invasion for both Egypt and Byzantium. Faced with this threat, Metochites deplores the constant decline of the Empire, recognizing the “Scythian” omnipotence as something inevitable. This situation is also reflected in Ibn Khaldūn’s writings with the concept of an uncontrollable corruption of the civilized world, also symbolised in the outbreak of the plague in 1347.

The next essay bears the title “Plethon, Scholarios, and the Byzantine State of Emergency” (pp. 633–652). N. Siniosoglou accesses Plethon’s contribution to the Byzantine intellectual history and its relationship with pagan theories, referring also to Gennadios Scholarios’ reaction against “polytheism” and “Hellenism” represented by Plethon.

In the last study of the volume under the title “The Byzantine Legacy in Early Modern Political Thought” (pp. 653–668), Paschalis Kitromilides approaches the phenomenon of Byzantium’s survival in the European culture till the 18th century. Thus, he examines the adaptation of Byzantine political ideas in Europe, as well as the adaptation of spiritual life in Russia, a region, which was strongly attached to Orthodoxy and therefore inherited the Byzantine religious culture (the so-called idea of “Third Rome”).

To sum up, this volume attempts to give a new perspective on the examination of Byzantine intellectual life, and it

succeeds to a great extent. Of course, in such an effort, one cannot aim to include every aspect of intellectual life in a single volume. For example, several literary genres lack attention in this book, e.g. hagiographical texts, poetry, epistolography and texts written in the vernacular Byzantine language⁸, where individuality is more apparent. Another particularity of this work is that some chapters could absolutely serve as a didactic tool (chapters 1, 2, 10, 11 etc.), while others are addressed mostly to experts (18, 20, 36).

In such a huge collection of studies, there may be some omissions; apart from the remarks already made above, I shall cite an example from Normann Rusell’s study (“The Hesy-chast Controversy”, pp. 494–508), where the writer claims that Dexios was “a former pupil” of Gregoras (p. 504), although no testimonies about being his disciple exist, unlike for Isaak Argyros, who is clearly mentioned as Gregoras’ pupil. However, any omissions or mistakes cannot diminish the value of the book as a modern survey of Byzantium’s intellectual history. What is more noteworthy is the inconsistencies between the introduction (pp. 1–26) and the studies of the volume concerning the “autonomy” of ideas in Byzantium, as well as the claims that Byzantine “authors generally did not come from the super-elite” (p. 13) and that “Intellectual identity can be different from social or religious identity” (p. 14). In my view, many studies have been made about the small number of literati in Byzantium originating mostly from the upper class (or reaching the upper class using their *paideia*)⁹, whereas the autonomy of ideas in a society characterized by the omnipotence of the Orthodox dogma can easily be disputed, as seen in the cases of Ioannis Italos, Nikephoros Gregoras or Plethon, some of them analysed in this volume.

Anna Sklaveniti

⁸ A treatment of vernacular literature could have been expected, since in the introduction we read that “the ability to think critically about the content of that education did not necessarily require a familiarity with, say Aristotle, any more than it does now ...” (Introduction, p. 13).

⁹ See, for example, A. KARPOZELOS, The Correspondence of Theodoros Hyrtakenos. *JÖB* 40 (1990) 283; I. SEVČENKO, Society and Intellectual Life in the 14th century, in: Actes du XIV Congrès International des Études Byzantines, ed. M. Berza – E. Stănescu. Bucharest 1974, 69–92, esp. 69–76.

⁶ Krallis (p. 614 of the present volume) isolates only Kantakouzenos’ case, saying that his history has the form of a personal political apologia, which would also be correct for the case of Gregoras.

⁷ On Gregoras’ obvious preference for ancient rulers, see E. KOUNTOURA-GALAKE, Πρότυπα αρχαίων νομοθετών κατά τις επιστολές του Νικηφόρου Γρηγορά. Δίκαιο και πολιτική πρακτική, in: Αντικήνσωρ, τιμητικός τόμος Σπίρου Ν. Τρωιάνου για τα ογδοηκοστά γενέθλιά του. Athens 2013, 679–704.

S. GADOR-WHYTE, *Theology and Poetry in Early Byzantium: The Kontakia of Romanos the Melodist*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017. X+237 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-14013-4.

Romanos Melodos, as poet, preacher and orator, has continuously received more attention than any other hymn writer in Byzantium. A recently published extensive bibliography compiled by Johannes Koder (2015; see full reference at the

end) offers conclusive evidence of this. Certainly, there are still many issues concerning Romanos' life, education, source of inspiration, aims, not to mention the reception of his work, that need further investigation. Hence, the present volume by Sarah Gador-Whyte with the promising title "Theology and Poetry in Early Byzantium" and the clarifying subtitle "The Kontakia of Romanos the Melodist" justifiably claims a place in this special field. It should, however, be made clear from the start that it does not represent a systematic study of Romanos' theology, nor is it a survey of all the rhetorical devices used in his hymns, as implied by its title. In fact, the focus is on specific rhetorical techniques and literary devices employed by Romanos, in order to effectively convey the doctrines of Christ's incarnation and the restoration of humanity, as well as to encourage listeners' engagement. In this context, it is stressed that Romanos is following the biblical and Greek and Syriac Christian tradition.

The book is a revised version of Gador-Whyte's doctoral thesis (University of Melbourne) and follows four other contributions she has published on related issues. It is structured in four chapters, preceded by a preface and an introduction, and followed by general conclusions, a bibliography, an index of biblical passages and a general index. Each chapter is subdivided into sections with an introduction and a conclusion.

Taking a closer look at the content, the introduction discusses information about Romanos' life, the narrative and dialogic character of the kontakion in general and the debt the genre owes to the Syriac and Greek literary tradition. As regards the liturgical setting of his kontakia, Gador-Whyte bases her arguments on the Typikon of the Great Church (p. 14), which only dates back to the ninth-tenth century. That this primary source does not reflect the situation of Romanos' period is clear from the study by Jean Grosdidier de Matons (*Romanos le Méléode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance*. Paris 1977, 48-66), in which he reviewed the changes in the hymn form and its liturgical setting after its flowering in the time of Romanos and his immediate successors and up to its final reduction to two strophes with the introduction of the kanon. Hence, the assumption made by Gador-Whyte that "The vigil service in which the kontakia were performed continued in Constantinople until the Latin invasion of 1204 and, although no new kontakia were being composed, the kontakion probably retained its place in that service" (p. 17) is not well founded.

The first chapter, explicitly aiming to serve "as an introduction to Romanos' poetry" (p. 53), focuses on a single kontakion, *On the passion of Christ*, discussing the rhetorical devices employed by Romanos to develop the theological concepts of the incarnation of Christ and the new creation of man. It is a selective commentary dealing with the role of Romanos as a narrator, especially focusing on rhetorical devices such as personifications of the natural world, direct addresses, dialogues, *ethopoeia* and *ekphrasis*, used to give a vivid and dramatic narrative of the biblical events. In this respect, it is pointed out that *ekphrasis* (vivid description) appeals to the senses (sight, taste) and physical and spiritual feelings (thirst). The chapter is divided into fourteen sections, each focusing on a single rhetorical device or theme.

In the second chapter, Gador-Whyte examines the use Romanos makes of typology, comparison and metaphor to highlight the concept of Christ as a second Adam and the redeemer of man from sin. Metaphors concerning nakedness, blindness, thirst, hunger or illness are used to describe the state of sinfulness. They are discussed in separate sections, while the Bible, Syriac and Greek texts are presented as possible sources. Though Gador-Whyte points out that Romanos draws on earlier traditions, for the most part she identifies similarities or draws parallels with the teaching of earlier theologians, rather than identifying differences or variations which would lead to her stated aim, which is to "situate Romanos' distinctive poetry within a tradition" (p. 62; cf. also pp. 54-79, 84-96).

The third chapter, in nine sections, focuses chiefly on paradox and typology, which Romanos uses to expand the concept of the second creation. It is stressed that he is following the tradition, especially the works of Ephraim the Syrian.

The fourth chapter also focuses on a single theme, namely the *Second Coming of Christ* and the *Final Judgement*, and on the rhetorical techniques of *ekphrasis*, *ethopoeia* and *apostrophe*, employed to enhance the participation of the congregants in the theological teaching, i.e. to prompt them to participate in the life of Christ. This chapter is divided into seven sections and ten subsections, in which these techniques are treated separately.

Some methodological issues need to be mentioned: while the chapter titles focus on the theological content, their division into sections and subsections is based principally on rhetorical, literary, structural and other characteristics of Romanos' kontakia. The recurring topics (e.g. typology, paradox, anti-Judaism, characterization, vivid description, direct address) in the section-headings indicate a fragmented analysis of these themes, accompanied by numerous cross-references and inevitable repetitions (not to mention the post hoc explanations of the methodology). A critical synthesis of the techniques employed for theological teaching would make for a clearer presentation.

The analysis of the kontakion in the first chapter appears likewise fragmentary, because it does not follow the order of the strophes in the hymn, but rather focuses on single passages, which are mentioned in a different order each time depending on the individual topic. Hence, passages are often repeated. This sort of presentation impedes the understanding of the whole structure of the hymn, the place of the rhetorical tools used in it, as well as their interrelationship, e.g. *ekphrasis*, paradox and word play. On the other hand, when something is seen out of context, as these passages are, it can lead to misunderstandings of Romanos' teaching, as e.g. in the case of his criticism of Jews. Thus, the proposed aim of showing the kontakion as a "carefully constructed" hymn remains to be realized.

In the first and third chapter, one and two sections respectively focus in particular on *paradox*. However, the term—and its cognate "paradoxical" as an attribute of the "nature of Christ", p. 24, "language", p. 25, "statement", p. 27, "imagery", p. 37, "rhetorical question", p. 38—used in various senses, is not defined or described in relation to the *oxymorons* and

the *antitheta* appearing in the quoted examples. Only in the third chapter is there a remark about paradox not being “merely a descriptive tool”, but rather “a vehicle for the changed reality” (p. 110). But it is not explicitly distinguished from the notion of the theological mystery or the miracle to which it is related (e.g. p. 111).

Gador-Whyte repeatedly stresses Romanos’ anti-Judaism, dedicating two separate sections, in the first and third chapter, to the subject. Referring to his polemic against Jews, it is noted that “Romanos excludes the Jews from the new creation, blaming them collectively for the death of Jesus” (p. 29; cf. pp. 49, 118f., 136f., 142). In a rather generalizing manner, it is observed that “throughout his kontakia, Romanos characterizes the Jews as subhuman; he presents them as murderers and liars and paints them with images of bitterness and poison” (p. 48). Elsewhere, it is concluded that his attitude “resonates with contemporary violence against Jews and other non-Christian groups, and encourages listeners to maintain this stance against Judaism” (p. 33; cf. p. 51), and assumed that his listeners “would certainly have been aware of the contemporary situations and his comments would therefore have played into existing hatred, fear and unease about the Jewish people living in Constantinople” (p. 144). However, such assumptions are somewhat simplistic, if one reads Romanos’ implications to biblical and homiletic texts in the framework of the traditional anti-heretical discourse (cf. Ps. 21, 14: ὡς λέων ὁ ἀρπάζων καὶ ὠρῶμενος for 36,13,1–3, Gr. de Matons). Moreover, his position in his other kontakia should be taken into consideration. He does not reject the Jews as a people as a whole. Scholars have already pointed out that Romanos’ references to Judaism involve three groups of people (Hebrews, Israelites and Jews), of which for the most part only “Jews” is used in negative statements (Koder, 2008, 35, 36, 39f.; full reference at the end). In one case in particular, Romanos acknowledges that a Jew had obtained a place in paradise (39,21,2–3, Gr. de Matons), while, in another, he predicts the Jews’ subsequent remorse (50,3,8–9, *ibidem*). In these circumstances, suggesting that Romanos encouraged violence against the Jews is hardly convincing.

Some awkwardly formulated assumptions can distort the meaning of a hymn, especially when they are presented as self-evident realities, e.g. “The life of Christ and his death and resurrection are the fulfilment of all history. But Romanos is aware that the world does not look very different, that it is necessary to argue strongly for a changed reality in a still very broken world” (p. 145, etc.). In another case, the distortion is the result of a misreading, e.g. the hesitation in the penitential monologue of the bleeding woman: “How will I be seen by my all-seeing one, bearing the shame of my sins?” This is misinterpreted: Gador-Whyte notes that “there is an irony in the first line of this speech in that the ‘all-seeing’ Christ of the Gospel did not see the woman until she had touched him” (p. 172). Lastly, the inclusion of typology among the “main rhetorical techniques” used by Romanos (p. 54) disregards the fact that for Romanos it is not about a simple “rhetorical technique” (figure of thought according to H. LAUSBERG, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik. Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*. Stuttgart 1990, §91), but a method of Biblical exegesis used extensively in Christian theology.

Concerning the quotations from Romanos’ hymns, they are cited throughout on the basis of the earlier Maas–Trypanis’ edition (1963) and not of the more recent one by J. Grosdidier de Matons (1964–1981), recognized in many respects as the better one. Of course, Gador-Whyte admits that she also consulted the latter and adopted emendations (p. 1, fn.1 and p. 50, fn. 80). However, the latter edition including translation and comments could also be useful for the English translation and interpretation of the quotations. For example, on one occasion, the rendering of indirect speech has confused the meaning: the lines “Ψόγον ἠκούσατε ἐκ πολλῶν τῶν παροικούντων κύκλω / ὡς τηροῦντες σάββατα καὶ νοσοῦντες” (36,11, Gr. de Matons) are translated “You have heard blame from the many who dwell around you, that ‘they observe the Sabbath and [yet] are sick’” (pp. 32–33). The blame in quotation marks should be corrected to ‘you observe the Sabbath and [yet] are sick’ (cf. also Gr. de Matons, IV, p. 217).

An inadvertent mistake resulting from the commingling of two phrases is found in the sentence “Greek had long since moved away from classical accent-based metrics” (p. 13), which was probably meant to be “... from classical syllable-based towards accent-based metrics”. The word κούοντας (p. 38) for ἀκούοντας is a typographical error.

In conclusion, this book, which offers some interesting remarks about the “clever use of rhetorical techniques and literary devices” (p. 2) in promoting biblical and doctrinal teaching, could have greatly profited from taking into consideration earlier studies on Romanos’ kontakia from the viewpoint of theology, as well as of language and rhetoric. Some useful bibliographical references are listed here: on Romanos’ teaching reflecting the Christological discourse of the sixth century: J. KODER, *Positionen der Theologie des Romanos Melodos. Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 143, 2 (2008) 25–56; and the more recent article J. KODER, Romanos Melodos, in: *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, vol. I/1 (VIe–VIIe s.), ed. C.G. Conticello (*Corpus Christianorum. La Théologie byzantine* I.1). Turnhout 2015, 115–194, with exhaustive bibliography. More specifically, on the image of Mary as a second Eve and as Mother of God or as the gate opened by Christ, there is an article by L.M. PELTOMAA, *Roles and Functions of Mary in the Hymnography of Romanos Melodos. Studia patristica* vol. 44 (2010) 487–498; and a more recent one in *Presbeia Theotokou. The Intercessory Role of Mary across Times and Places in Byzantium (4th–9th Century)*, ed. L.M. Peltomaa – A. Külzer – P. Allen. Vienna 2015. For the sections on rhetorical devices and linguistic style the following studies are relevant: K. MITSAKIS, *The Language of Romanos the Melodist*. Munich 1967; and H. HUNGER, *Romanos Melodos – Dichter, Prediger, Rhetor – und sein Publikum. JÖB* 34 (1984) 15–42, where among other characteristics special reference is made to irony. Last but not least, the comments on metre and rhythm, made *en passant* and not always entirely accurate (“kontakia have accentual metres”, p. 10, “Romanos’ kontakia are verse”, p. 13, “metre and structure combine to play the role of much of Romanos’ rhetoric”, p. 43), could have profited from the study on accentual poetry and metrics by M. LAUXTERMANN, *The Spring of*

Rhythm: An Essay on the Political Verse and Other Byzantine Metres (BV 12). Vienna 1999, which discusses the metric and colon structure of Romanos' kontakia.

Antonia Giannouli

Derek KRUEGER, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium (Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2014. 311 pp. ISBN 978-0-8122-4644-5.

Derek Krueger's latest book, which appeared as a paperback in 2018, deals with the "intersection of Byzantine Christian religious culture and contemporary critical approaches to the history of subjectivity" (p. 6), employing Byzantine liturgical hymnography to understand the individual in Byzantine society. Byzantinists and other medieval and late antique historians have shied away from liturgy, often finding it difficult to understand or not seeing the potential of liturgical material for analysing questions well beyond the scope of liturgy, theology, and religion. While hagiography can shed light on daily life and the individual within Byzantine society, liturgy was the place of first-hand religious experience, where the people sang hymns and said prayers. Thus, Krueger's book is an example of the insights a closer examination of Byzantine liturgy—the common prayer of the whole church, from lay people to clergy, men and women, where all levels of society, from slaves to emperors, could spend much of their time—can offer.

The book's seven chapters cover texts and liturgical services throughout the Christian life, particularly focusing on hymns sung during Lent. The author rightly notes at the outset that "focusing on hymns means focusing on the services where they were sung" (p. 5). Chapter 1, "Shaping Liturgical Selves" (pp. 1–28), introduces the reader to the book's goal: an overview of major figures—namely Romanos the Melodist, Andrew of Crete, Theodore the Stoudite, and Symeon the New Theologian—and their influence in the "establishment and transformation of liturgical models for the self," tracing continuities and developments from the sixth to ninth centuries, a period referred to as the "so-called Dark Age" from the rise of Islam to the "slow renaissance of Byzantine culture" (p. 3). Thus, theories of the "formation of the self" are seen in a "long trajectory" (p. 3). The liturgical rituals, specifically the genres of liturgical hymnography known as kanons and kontakia that are studied in this book, have a geographical focus on Constantinople, but Krueger makes the reader aware of the development of Byzantine ritual that incorporated elements from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the monasteries of the Judean Desert. In the second chapter, "Romanos the Melodist and the Christian Self" (pp. 29–66), the author examines kontakia of Romanos likely sung during Lent, specifically *On the Ten Virgins*, *On the Second Coming*, *On the Harlot*, as well as *On Doubting Thomas* (Sunday after Easter), *On the Samaritan*

Woman (after Easter?), *On the Healing of the Leper* (second Wednesday after Easter), and *On the Hemorrhaging Woman*. Chapter 3, "Calendar and Community in the Sixth Century" (pp. 67–105), looks at other kontakia by Romanos from the liturgical year, noting that most Christians "never went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but all had sojourned through the story" (p. 72) told through the liturgical celebrations of events from the life of Christ. Nevertheless, liturgy bridged the gap between past and present, "allowing something more than a re-enactment of the ritual drama" (p. 85).

Chapter 4, "Eucharistic Prayers: Compunction and the History of Salvation" (pp. 106–129), departs from hymnography and focuses on the Divine Liturgy through the lens of Justinian's Novel 137, which gave instructions on the recitation of the Anaphora so that those hearing it "may be moved to greater compunction." Here, the author claims that, after the trend to recite the Anaphora "silently" (μυστικῶς), "the Eucharist retained its character as a penitential rite" (p. 127). This is a surprising claim, firstly, because the text of the Anaphora itself often speaks of praise and doxology, and, secondly, because later canonical legislation at the Council in Trullo proscribes the Anaphora on weekdays during Great Lent, the penitential period *par excellence*, and instead prescribes the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

The next chapters, Chapter 5, "The Penitential Bible and the Great Kanon of Andrew of Crete" (pp. 130–163), and Chapter 6, "The Voice of the Sinner in First-Person Hymns of the Lenten Triodion" (pp. 164–196), address Great Lent directly and introduce the reader to the genre of hymnographic kanon and the themes of the Great Kanon specifically. The final chapter, "Liturgies of the Monastic Self in Symeon the New Theologian" (pp. 197–214), focuses on monastic piety at the Stoudios Monastery through hymns, catechetical discourses, and letters that "scripted and choreographed" (p. 208) monastic life, speaking of the monastery as "a sort of Actors Studio" (p. 197) to form the subject—the Byzantine Christian. Regarding scripts, choreographies, and actors, Andrew Walker White's subsequent study of performance and theatre in Byzantium contextualizes early Christian and Byzantine views of liturgy and "acting"¹.

Overall, Krueger knows the liturgical material and its history well and, thus, is cautious when describing practices in lesser-known sixth-century liturgical contexts in Constantinople and careful when considering later or contemporary practices in the Byzantine Rite (p. 31).

A few statements, however, require comment. The author's dependence upon the thought of Michel Foucault is stated at the outset. The "technologies of the self" through recognition of one's sinfulness and the verbalization of this state that Foucault theorized for Western Christianity are applied here to Byzantium. Although Krueger notes that such a method has limitations, he does not elaborate. A passing discussion of David Brakke's criticism of the "Foucaultian model for interior self-formation" notes that certain monastic authors avoided such verbalization, seeing it as exterior and

¹ A. W. WHITE, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*. Cambridge 2015.

foreign to the self, preferring instead to adopt the words of Scripture, specifically the Psalms. Brakke notes that in reality a categorization or representation of one type of “self” was impossible, although each person had the same goal—losing one’s “self” (cf. Matthew 10:39 *inter alia*) in order to attain the transcendent goal of a life directed to unity with the Trinity², what David Fagerberg has called “liturgical asceticism,” or an eschatological reorientation in worship³. Brian A. Butcher has recently applied the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur—equally foreign to Byzantine liturgy as Foucault—to an analysis of the Byzantine Great Blessing of Waters on Theophany⁴. But rather than a penitent self, Ricoeur’s “summoned self”—the human being recognized as “*capax Dei*, ‘summoned’ to a doxological vocation”—guides Butcher’s investigation of subjectivity in relation to Byzantine liturgical rites. Thus, the application of modern theory to Byzantine liturgical texts can bring out varying perspectives, although not all of them may be equally useful.

Regarding the selection of Byzantine liturgical texts used for analysing the self in this book, it seems the pool may be too limited or selective for the conclusions proposed here to be completely convincing. In the introduction, the author states that hymnography written in the first person, or “‘I’-speech” is “clustered especially around Lent” in Byzantine liturgy (p. 26). Certainly, Krueger masterfully presents the reader with numerous examples of hymnography in the first person from the Lenten cycle, but one finds this throughout Byzantine hymnography. At Christmas, for example, the ninth ode of the kanon of Kosmas of Maiouma proclaims “A strange and wonderful mystery I see, the cave is heaven, the virgin the cherubim throne, the manger the place in which Christ, the God whom nothing can contain, is laid ...”⁵ In a kanon for the Dormition of the Theotokos by John Damascene, the ‘I’-speech appears again: “I will open my mouth and it will be filled with the Spirit, and I will utter a word for the queen and mother, and I will be seen keeping glad festival, and rejoicing I will sing of her Dormition.”⁶ For many of the major feasts of the liturgical year, the refrain of the ninth ode of the kanon often begins with “Magnify, O my soul ...” and the hymns are far from penitential. Such examples raise the question

of the relationship between the source texts studied and the conclusions made about the self. Most of the examples that the author presents are from Lent and penitential. But the same hymnographers that wrote penitential hymns also wrote just as many—if not more—hymns for various celebrations for other seasons of the year, expressing not just “Orthodox guilt” (esp. pp. 2 and 13–15) but also Christian joy. One might also ask how the themes expressed in the hymnography of, for example, Romanos compare with other literature from the same period (cf. esp. pp. 44 and 59), especially with regard to notions of guilt, penance, and the individual.

In the presentation of some of the liturgical context, certain information is also selective. The incomplete outline of Sabaitic Morning Prayer (p. 22), or Orthros, emphasizes all the penitential parts of the service without mentioning that it concludes with psalms of praise (Pss 148–150 [LXX]) and a doxology composed of a list of laudatory exclamations from various books of the Bible. Likewise, the focus on Psalm 50 (LXX) as an “essential script” for repentance in the daily liturgy overlooks the joyous festal hymns sung after Psalm 50 during the liturgical year that repeat biblical verses such as “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace” (Christmas, cf. Luke 2:14)⁷ and “‘Release me, for my eyes have seen your salvation.’ You have come into the world to save the human race. Lord, glory to you” (Hypapante, cf. Luke 2:29)⁸, and even speaking of angels marvelling at human nature being taken up into the heavens in the hymn after Psalm 50 for Christ’s ascension⁹.

This penitential focus in Krueger’s book is nuanced by his conclusion, “A Communion of Savable Sinners” (215–221): although, “by focusing on the self’s construction, this volume has illustrated the history and constitution of a ‘negative self-image’ in Byzantium,” the author admits that “the Byzantine liturgy taught that God would not be angry forever” and the liturgy provided a model for a “savable self” (p. 220). One might ask, however, if the actual “formation” of the Christian was not understood by the Byzantines to take place earlier in life, during the rites of initiation, namely baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist. In the prayers of the baptismal rite itself, already found in prayers extant in eighth-century manuscripts and contemporaneous with some of the hymnography examined in this book, the priest explicitly asks God to “form your Christ in the one who is about to be reborn”¹⁰. Thus, in order to more fully understand the “Byzantine ritual theory” that “undergirded Byzantine ritual practice” (p. 221), scholars should also look beyond kontakion and kanon hymnography

² D. BRAKKE, *Making Public the Monastic Life: Reading the Self in Evagrius Ponticus’ Talking Back*, in: *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, ed. D. Brakke – M. L. Satlow – S. Weitzman. Bloomington – Indianapolis 2005, 222–233.

³ D. W. FAGERBERG, *On Liturgical Asceticism*. Washington, D.C. 2013.

⁴ B. A. BUTCHER, *Liturgical Theology after Schmemmann: An Orthodox Reading of Paul Ricoeur (Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought)*. New York 2018.

⁵ Μυστήριον ξένον ὁρῶ καὶ παράδοξον οὐρανὸν; Μηνναία τοῦ ὄλου ἐνιαυτοῦ, II. Rome 1889, 670; E. FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae (StT 212–215bis)*. Vatican 1960–1966, II, 452.

⁶ Ἀνοιξὼ τὸ στόμα μου καὶ πληρωθήσεται Πνεύματος, καὶ λόγον ἐρεύξομαι τῇ βασιλίδι Μητρὶ; Μηνναία τοῦ ὄλου ἐνιαυτοῦ, VI. Rome 1901, 413; FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum I*, 125.

⁷ Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη. Σήμερον; Μηνναία τοῦ ὄλου ἐνιαυτοῦ, II. Rome 1889, 661; FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum I*, 320.

⁸ Ἀνοιγέσθω ἡ πύλη τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; Μηνναία τοῦ ὄλου ἐνιαυτοῦ, III. Rome 1896, 482; FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum I*, 123.

⁹ Σήμερον ἐν οὐρανοῖς αἱ ἄνω Δυνάμεις; Πεντηκοστάριον. Rome 1883, 313; FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum III*, 486.

¹⁰ Vatican Library, Barb. gr. 336 (*Diktyon* 64879), fol. 97v; E. VELKOVSKA – S. PARENTI, *Evchologij Barberini Gr. 336*. Omsk 32011, 337 (§ 121).

to include prayers and rites of life-cycle rituals and the sacramental life of Byzantine Christians in their investigation of the self in Byzantium.

While more classically minded liturgical scholars may be critical of other aspects of this book or find it challenging¹¹, it nevertheless has already provoked discussion within the field of Byzantine liturgy and is beautifully written in a way that invites others into that discussion.

Daniel Galadza

¹¹ A. AVDOKHIN. Caught in Transition: Liturgical Studies, Grand Narratives, and Methodologies of the Past and Future. *Scrinium* 12 (2016) 329–339.

The Syriac Manuscripts of Tur 'Abdin in the Fondo Grünwald, ed. V. Ruggieri. Roma: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana – Valore Italiano 2017. 488 pp. ISBN 978-88-97789-47-5.

This is a problematic volume. The first problem arises from the fact that the book does not readily convey to which genre it belongs. Since the genre of the book is not defined, it is not exactly clear what the contributors wanted to achieve and hence how to evaluate the work. The volume leaves the reader to define its genre and the reviewer is in the same position. The book is most probably going to be classified as a manuscript catalogue but, strangely enough, the contributors of the volume do not use that word, either in the title or in the introduction. It may well be that this decision was deliberate because if it is a manuscript catalogue, then it was produced in a very idiosyncratic way, which cannot be accepted. According to the subtitle, the volume contains “texts” and, indeed, one can describe the volume as a collection of studies focusing on different aspects of a selected group of Syriac (and one Garshuni, that is Arabic in Syriac script) manuscripts from the Tur 'Abdin region.

A total of thirty-four manuscripts are covered in the volume. The manuscripts themselves are preserved in six different locations in the Tur 'Abdin region (south-eastern Turkey) – the church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin (23 manuscripts), Mor Gabriel monastery (3 manuscripts), an uncertain number of private owners in the Midyat region (4 manuscripts) and in Yemişli / Enhil (2 manuscripts), a family in Gülgöze / 'Aynwardo (1 manuscript) and Mar Saba church in Ḥaḥ (1 manuscript) – and are divided in the volume into two groups: those from the Mardin region (Ma) and those from the region of Mor Gabriel monastery (MG). It may be that at least some of the manuscripts from the region of Mor Gabriel monastery have changed their location (for example, the manuscript MG 10 was consulted at the Mor Gabriel monastery but was digitized few years ago in Enhil). The manuscripts were studied by the participant scholars based on the microfilms made in the years 1990/1991 by Vincenzo Ruggieri who also did an initial material description *de visu*. The microfilms belong

today to the “Fondo Grünwald” (the title of the volume is for that reason very misleading), although no details about its other holdings and, most importantly, physical location of the “Fondo” are provided. Only the miniatures were photographed in colour, whereas the rest was done in black and white; some manuscripts were not photographed in full. Some manuscripts were chosen for their age and art historical significance; besides those, the reasons that guided the choice remain unexplained¹. To be more precise, the volume addresses lectionaries (8 manuscripts), *Fenqīthō* (6 manuscripts), prayer books (2 manuscripts), New Testament (4 manuscripts), a collection of saints' lives (1 manuscript), collections of canonical works (2 manuscripts), patristic and theological works (10 manuscripts), the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlul (1 manuscript). There are six manuscripts datable to the 7th–10th centuries, twenty-seven from the 12th–15th and one from the 18th century. Twenty manuscripts are on parchment (the indication of parchment as writing material for Ma 13 is not correct).

Any description of a manuscript is first of all assessed against the earlier descriptions. Nowhere in the volume can one find a clear indication of vital significance: which of the manuscripts were already described and studied and which are being introduced for the first time. As a matter of fact, the collection of the church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin formerly belonged to the patriarchal library housed at the monastery Deir al-Za'faran and was catalogued twice, by the future Patriarch Afrām Baršūm (1887–1957)² and by the Metropolitan of Mardin Yūḥannā Dōlabānī (1885–1969)³. It goes without saying that those catalogues do not correspond to the modern standards applied to the cataloguing of manuscripts, but nevertheless, they usually manage to present the basic information that one needs to know. Furthermore, many of the manuscripts from that collection were studied by scholars during the 20th century, and one would expect not only to find a relevant bibliography, but also the use or at least acknowledgement of the achieved results (for justice's sake it must be noticed that some of relevant publications were in fact used in different chapters, but remain hidden in the footnotes).

Eleven manuscripts from the Mor Gabriel monastery and surrounding area (referred to under the abbreviation MG in the volume) are less known. One cannot exclude, however, that a careful reading of the aforementioned earlier catalogues (and others dealing with the Syriac manuscripts of Tur 'Abdin) could help to identify those and to clarify the provenance of seven manuscripts, which are now in private ownership (for

¹ Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (www.vhmdl.org) digitized a total of 875 manuscripts in Syriac script preserved at the collection of the church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin. Being formerly a part of the Patriarchal collection it is widely known for a large number of valuable Syriac manuscripts.

² A. BARŠŪM, *Srīṭōṭō d-Dayrō d-Kūrkmō / Maḥṭūtāt Dayr al-Za'farān*. Damascus 2008.

³ F. Y. DŌLABĀNĪ, *Mḥawwyōnō da-ktōbē srīṭē d-bēt arkē d-Dayrō d-Mōr Ḥananyō – Za'faran (Syriac Patrimony 9)*. Damascus 1994.

instance, one can easily identify three manuscripts, MG 4, MG 5 and MG 6 in the catalogue of Baršūm⁴).

The volume opens with an introduction (pp. 9–12) describing the history of the project. Then follows an overview of the manuscripts (pp. 13–36), next comes a group of studies: codicological, liturgical and textual analysis of the Gospel and New Testament manuscripts written by M. Pavan (pp. 39–158), an essay on the “ninth century Syriac culture between Greeks and Arabs” and three chapters on individual 9th century authors, Moshe bar Kepha, John of Dara, and David bar Paulos (pp. 159–202), all written by E. Braida. Afterwards comes a chapter containing the basic information about each manuscript (pp. 203–247). Finally follows the longest chapter on miniatures and ornament (pp. 249–370), written by M. Bernabò. The studies are followed by colour plates (pp. 371–485) and an index (pp. 487–488).

Already this survey of contents suggests that much attention was devoted to the New Testament manuscripts, lectionaries and the manuscripts containing illuminations. Indeed, M. Pavan did his best to describe twelve Gospel Books and lectionaries in all possible details (however, saying nothing about folio/page numbers, quire signatures, catchwords, ruling technique, not providing a collation; only rarely indicating a quire structure, writing material and particularities of the handwriting and binding—the analytical description of the lectionary systems contextualizes those more broadly). Another well-covered aspect concerns the miniatures and ornament. In fact, the chapter by Bernabò with an exhaustive art historical description of nine manuscripts is the most coherent (Ma 1, Ma 2, Ma 3, Ma 4, MG 3, MG 4, MG 5, MG 6, MG 7).

The other groups of manuscripts were studied disproportionately poorly. What one can find about the content of those manuscripts is limited to a basic description (pp. 205–247) but even that is done in an unacceptably unsatisfactory manner. It will not be an exaggeration to say that none of the remaining twenty-two liturgical, theological and literary manuscripts were properly described and identified (a lack of detailed description of the rich collections of texts on monasticism—Ma 21, Ma 22, MG 10—is particularly regrettable). Provided the text has a full title with an explicit indication of the author, the author’s name and the title (sometimes only in Syriac, sometimes only in English translation) was documented. However, the information taken from a manuscript was not verified critically. Since the *incipits* and *desinitis* are never provided, a user has no other choice but to consult the manuscript and to study on his own if it is indeed that very work, if the text is complete and if the text form (redaction) is already known. None of those points were even touched upon in the description. Unexpectedly, additional information about the contents of those manuscripts appears in the introductory survey of the manuscripts (pp. 13–36).

Even less fortunate were the texts where neither a title nor an author is indicated, not to mention fragments or texts

illegible on a microfilm. In those cases we learn only about the presence of an “unidentified text” or “Patristic texts”. An important 13th century collection of texts on monasticism (MG 10) did not deserve any attention at all: none of these texts is listed and a relevant study by Vööbus is not mentioned (see below). Even the brief title given to the manuscript (“*Vitae patrum*”) is absolutely misleading.

Such negligence is very disappointing because most of those manuscripts are old and will undoubtedly be of interest to scholars, e.g. manuscripts on parchment: six *Fenqūthō* (Ma 6, Ma 9, MG 1, MG 2, MG 8, MG 9), two collections of canonical texts (Ma 7, Ma 8), the oldest copy of John of Dara’s theological works (Ma 10), the homilies of Jacob of Serugh (Ma 11) and Gregory of Nazianzus (Ma 12).

One would expect, seeing the presence of special chapters dealing with three Syriac authors, Moshe bar Kepha, John of Dara, and David bar Paulos, to find a proper description of at least the manuscripts under consideration. Yet, even those were not adequately described (it is therefore not surprising that the presence of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius in the manuscript Ma 20 containing Moshe bar Kepha’s *On Paradise* was overlooked). A reader will find identification of the works and information about other extant copies of the texts, but the essential information is not provided anywhere. Since in case of Moshe bar Kepha’s *Hexaemeron* and *On Paradise* we are dealing with extensive works that consist of many chapters and sometimes with further subdivisions, one would expect to see the relevant information: title, *incipit* and *desinit* for each chapter. In practical terms, it means that if somebody is interested in comparing the content of those manuscripts with other manuscript copies, he/she will have to consult a manuscript, because the description turns out to be useless. The description of a manuscript containing the letters of David bar Paulos is particularly disappointing. Whereas on pp. 228–229 one can find a list of the works (in Syriac only), the chapter on that author discusses the manuscript copies of the letters⁵, shares some details about his life and works and concludes, rather unexpectedly, with some observations on “epistolography as a genre in 9th cent. Near Eastern literature”. Again, for somebody interested in obtaining precise information about the texts of David bar Paulos included in the manuscript all that proves useless.

The overall idiosyncratic character of the volume is also reflected in the index. Instead of providing a guide through the rich material of the manuscripts, it lists the names of the ancient authors disregarding whether the name appears in the description of a manuscript or in the context of a study. All kinds of historical information (mentioned for at least some manuscripts in the volume) was not put to good use.

Besides the problems noticed above, the volume has a large number of editorial shortcomings, only some of which will be mentioned below:

⁴ A. BARŠŪM, *Srīṭōṭō d-Ṭūr ‘Abdīn / Maḥṭūṭāt Ṭūr ‘Abdīn*. Damascus 2008, 131, 131–133 (both belonging to the church of Mart Shmoni in Midyat), 343 (belonging to the church in ‘Aynwardo).

⁵ It is stated that the current whereabouts of the manuscript are unknown, but the manuscript is present in the collection and its copy is available at the Virtual Reading Room of HMML.

– The volume was produced by Italian scholars in English and definitely did not go through the hands of a native speaker who could improve the language (e.g. the word “font” was inappropriately used for “handwriting / book hand / script”, the phrase “binding is in quinions” (p. 51) instead of “manuscript is composed of quinions / quires consist of five bifolia”).

– Lack of internal coherence between the chapters by different authors: for example, manuscript MG 7, according to a brief description (p. 243) contains a commentary by Dionysius bar Šalibi on the Four Gospels but then, suddenly we find its treatment among the New Testament manuscripts and lectionaries with more detailed description of its contents (pp. 59–63). The two descriptions drastically contradict each other and there are also contradictions within each description (e.g. the total number of folios is indicated as 310, whereas the last text ends on fol. 316!).

– Lack of consistency in transliterations, terminology and even in the references to the manuscripts (while usually following the introduced formula Ma<number> or MG<number> one comes across all possible deviations: Ma <number>, MG <number>, MaG <number>, M <number>, Mardin <number>, Mor Gabriel <number>).

– Inconsistency in renderings of names (p. 52: “monastery of Mar Ya‘qūb the Winner, the Egyptian and the Recluse”, p. 53: “monastery of Mor Ya‘qūb ‘the glorious, the Egyptian, the Recluse””, pp. 60–63: Dyonisus bar Salibi, elsewhere: Dionysius).

– All the Syriac manuscripts presented by the volume were written either in Estrangela or in Serto, but throughout the volume only an East Syriac typeface was used (sometimes the Estrangela characters slip in and must have been corrected).

– Quotations from Syriac contain a disappointingly large number of typos and false readings that lead to wrong renderings in the translation (randomly selected and compared against the manuscript, the eight-lines long colophon on p. 226 contains twelve mistakes; the Harklean colophon on p. 46 n. 153 contains six, including one in the year).

– The English translation from Syriac is often wrong (one of the most terrible examples is provided by the translation of the colophon on p. 219 which begins with the words “[...] of the terrible God” whereas in reality the text says⁶: “Glory to the Father who strengthened”; Syriac *d-ḥayyel* (particle followed by Pa‘el Pf. from the verb √HYL) was confused for *dhil* (part. pass. of the verb √DHL)).

– Transliteration from Syriac was made in an odd manner (p. 216: John Bar Qwrwsws > John bar Qūrsōs, Syriac name is also wrongly transcribed) and inconsistently (p. 226: Mor Abay – Mar Abay, Qellith – Kalit).

– In many cases the folio and page references do not correspond to the foliation / pagination present in the manuscripts (for example, out of seven manuscripts from the church of the Forty Martyrs that are analysed in detail by M. Pavan the folio

references of only one, Ma 4, correspond to the foliation of the manuscript).

It will be useful for a reader of the volume to know that all the manuscripts belonging to the church of the Forty Martyrs as well as many other collections in Tur ‘Abdin are now available online at the Virtual Reading Room of HMML (www.vhmml.org)⁷. Not all of those were recognized by the participating scholars and it is worthwhile providing the project numbers for those that remained unidentified: CFMM 718 (Ma 6), CFMM 310 (Ma 8), CFMM 751 (Ma 9), CFMM 158 (Ma 16), CFMM 455 (Ma 21), CFMM 426 (Ma 22), CFMM 181 (Ma 23), CET 2 (MG 8), CET 3 (MG 9).

Throughout the volume one feels a somewhat artificial attachment to the microfilms of “Fondo Grünwald”. On the one hand, the authors openly and on many occasions admit that the imperfect quality of the black and white microfilms meant that they were unable to describe the manuscripts fully; on the other hand, they were aware that at least some manuscripts were digitized by HMML and hence could prove more useful for their project. And yet, despite occasionally consulting the digital copies produced by HMML they preferred to use the microfilms, whilst the digital copies could have been provided to them instantly. The entire collection of the church of the Forty Martyrs was digitized by HMML in the period between 2005 and 2009 and became freely available through the Virtual Reading Room in 2016.

Thus, inside a heavy and a very expensive volume (€220 at the time of writing) hides a collection of disconnected essays unequally describing a selection of Syriac manuscripts from Tur ‘Abdin. Whereas some aspects of the manuscripts under consideration are presented in detail, the content and significance of most (and especially of the MG group) remained undisclosed. By any academic standards, the volume was badly conceived and carelessly executed. The book would have benefited immensely from a professional peer-review, typesetting and book design. Given the association of the project with the Pontifical Oriental Institute, which is, as a rule, deservedly credited for its rigorous scholarship, the overall inferior quality of the volume and lack of editorial supervision is all the more surprising. The price charged by the publisher would imply intensive engagement in the production of the book on its part. The volume leaves a contrary impression and is not worth the money.

For convenience’s sake, I provide below a concordance of the manuscripts studied in the volume with their corresponding HMML project numbers (abbreviations: CFMM – Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, CET – Churches in Enhil, MGMT – Mor Gabriel monastery). I follow the dating as given in the volume and indicate the relevant secondary literature.

⁶ Consultation of a digital copy at the Virtual Reading Room of HMML facilitates reading of the colophon much better than a reading based on black and white microfilm.

⁷ See C. STEWART, HMML and Syriac Manuscripts, in: *Manuscripta Syriaca. Des sources de première main*, ed. F. Briquel Chatonnet – M. Debié. Paris 2015, 49–63; C. STEWART, An Update on the Digitization and Cataloging Work of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML). *Christianskij Vostok* 8 [14] (2017) 153–170.

- Ma 1 – CFMM 38**
Illuminated Harklean Gospel lectionary (CE 1229/30)
- Ma 2 – CFMM 41**
Illuminated Harklean Gospel lectionary (13th c., scribe Dioscoros Theodoros)
J. LEROY, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient*. Paris 1964, 371–383; A. KAPLAN, *Le lectionnaire de Dioscoros Théodoros (Mardin Syr. 41/2)*. Bruxelles 2013.
- Ma 3 – CFMM 39**
Harklean Gospel lectionary (13th c.)
- Ma 4 – CFMM 37**
Harklean Gospel lectionary (CE 1272/3)
LEROY, *ibidem* 383–389; A. VÖÖBUS, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac*, vol. II (*CSCO* 496, *Subs.* 79). Louvain 1987, 143–144.
- Ma 5 – CFMM 40**
Harklean Gospel lectionary (13th c.)
- Ma 6 – CFMM 718**
Fenqūthō (12th c.)
- Ma 7 – CFMM 309**
Collection of texts on canon law (7th–8th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen. Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde. I. Westsyrische Originalurkunden 1, B (CSCO 317; Subs. 38)*. Louvain 1970, 443–447; W. SELB, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht, Band II*. Wien, 1989, 98–110; H. KAUFHOLD, *Griechisch-syrische Väterlisten der frühen griechischen Synoden. Oriens Christianus 77 (1993) 1–96, passim*.
- Ma 8 – CFMM 310**
Collection of texts on canon law (8th c.)
VÖÖBUS, *Kanonessammlungen*, 447–452; SELB, *ibidem*; KAUFHOLD, *ibidem*.
- Ma 9 – CFMM 751**
Fenqūthō (CE 1208/9)
- Ma 10 – CFMM 356**
John of Dara, theological works (9th–10th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *Important Manuscript Discoveries on Iwannīs of Dārā and his Literary Heritage. JAOS 96 (1976) 576–578*; A. VÖÖBUS, *Die Entdeckung von Überresten der altsyrischen Apostelgeschichte. Oriens Christianus 64 (1980) 32–35*.
- Ma 11 – CFMM 138**
Jacob of Serugh, *Mēm̄rē* (13th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēm̄rē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg. I. Sammlungen: Die Handschriften (CSCO 344, Subs. 39)*. Louvain 1973, 53–54.
- Ma 12 – CFMM 129**
Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations* (9th c.)
A. SCHMIDT & M. QUASCHNING-KIRSCH, *Die syrischen Handschriften der Homilien des Gregor von Nazianz. Le Muséon 113 (2000) 87–114, here 90–91*.
- Ma 13 – CFMM 34**
Harklean New Testament (13th c.)
VÖÖBUS, *Studies* 193.
- Ma 14 – CFMM 35**
Peshitta New Testament with Harklean Apocalypse (12th–13th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *The Apocalypse in the Harklean version. A facsimile Edition of Ms. Mardin Orth 35, fol. 143r-159v, with an Introduction (CSCO 400, Subs. 56)*. Louvain 1978; VÖÖBUS, *Studies* 167.
- Ma 15 – CFMM 16**
Psalter and excerpts from patristic texts (CE 1474)
- Ma 16 – CFMM 158**
David bar Paulos, *Letters* (14th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *Entdeckung des Briefkorpus des Dawid bar Paulos. Oriens Christianus 58 (1974) 45–50*.
- Ma 17 – CFMM 102**
Moshe bar Kepha, *Commentary on Luke* (14th–15th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *Discovery of Exegetical Works of Mōšē bar Kēphā*. Stockholm 1973, 19–22.
- Ma 18 – CFMM 366**
Cause of all Causes (CE 1473)
- Ma 19 – CFMM 371**
Moshe bar Kepha, *Hexaemeron* (15th c.)
- Ma 20 – CFMM 368**
Moshe bar Kepha, *On Paradise; Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (CE 1364/5)
A. VÖÖBUS, *New Manuscript Discoveries for the Literary Legacy of Mōšē bar Kēphā: the Genre of Theological Writings, HThR 68 (1975) 377–384, here 379*; A. VÖÖBUS, *Discovery of an Unknown Syrian Author, Methodios of Petrā. Abr-Nahrain 17 (1976-1977) 1–4*; G. REININK, *Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius (CSCO 540–1; Syri 220–1)*. Louvain, 1993.
- Ma 21 – CFMM 455**
Monastic prayer book with texts on monasticism (13th c.)
- Ma 22 – CFMM 426**
Collection of texts on monasticism (15th c.)
A. VÖÖBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient. A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*, vol. 3 (*CSCO* 500; *Subs.* 81). Louvain 1988, see index 446)
- Ma 23 – CFMM 181**
Homilies by John Chrysostom and Ephrem the Syrian (14th c., in Garshūnī)
- MG 1** (belongs to a private owner in Midyat region)
Fenqūthō (12th–13th c.)
- MG 2** (belongs to a private owner in Midyat region)
Fenqūthō (12th–13th c.)
- MG 3** (belongs to a private owner in Midyat region)
Harklean Gospel lectionary (CE 964)
- MG 4** (belongs to a private owner in Midyat region)
Harklean New Testament (CE 840/1)
P. HARB, *Unbekannte Handschriften im Tur 'Abdin*, in: III Symposium Syriacum, 1980, ed. R. Lavenant (*OCA* 221). Roma, 1983, 349–354, here 353–354.
- MG 5** (belongs to Mor Sobo Church in Ḥaḥ)
Illuminated Harklean Gospel lectionary (CE 1226/7)
LEROY, *ibidem* 321–332; HARB, *ibidem* 351–353.
- MG 6** (belongs to a private owner in 'Aynwardo)
Illuminated Gospel lectionary (CE 1201)
HARB, *ibidem* 349–350.
- MG 7** (preserved at the Mor Gabriel monastery)
Dionysius bar Ṣalibi, *Commentary on the Four Gospels (with miniatures)* (CE 1457)
LEROY, *ibidem* 419.
- MG 8 – CET 2**
Fenqūthō (12th c.)
- MG 9 – CET 3**
Fenqūthō (12th c.)

MG 10 – CET 76

Collection of texts on monasticism (CE 1207/8)

A. VÖÖBUS, Die Entdeckung eines Florilegiums der asketischen und mystischen Schriften im Syrischen, in: *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen*, ed. G. Wiessner. Wiesbaden 1978, 263–271.

MG 11 – MGMT 177

Bar Bahlul, *Lexicon*; Bar 'Ebroyo, *Book of Splendors* (CE 1780/1)

Grigory Kessel

